

ART HISTORY CAREER GUIDE

**Fine Arts
Career Services**

The University of Texas at Austin

   @UTFACS

UTexas.edu/finearts/careers

FACS@austin.utexas.edu

512-232-7333

FINE ARTS CAREER SERVICES OFFERS:

ONE-ON-ONE ADVISING

Resume and cover letter reviews, mock interviews, graduate school advising and general career exploration. Call us for appointments!

JOB BOARD

Fine Arts Works is exclusively for COFA students and alumni. Check it out at bit.ly/fawjobs

PROGRAMMING

Tips and Tiffs professional development workshops, *Creative Exchange* guest speaker series and info sessions on FACS-specific initiatives

FUNDING

Intern Scholarship, Professional Development Travel Initiative (PDTI), New York Seminar Scholarship and more. bit.ly/facsfunds

AND MORE

Online internship classes, New York Seminar spring break trip, Networking Night and more!

FINEARTS.UTEXAS.EDU/CAREERS - FACS@AUSTIN.UTEXAS.EDU - 512-232-7333

   @UTFACS

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the next step in thinking about your career in art history! Whether you are a freshman or nearing graduation, now is a good time to think about your future. This career guide is meant to give you broad information as you picture yourself working in different environments. You are welcome to meet with Fine Arts Career Services for further guidance! We are here to brainstorm different career paths, give guidance on professional documents or help you find the right job or internship for your goals.

ABOUT ART HISTORY

Art history investigates human history through the study of visual arts, architecture and artifacts. It is arguably the most classically academic major within COFA.

Most art history coursework involves a process of developing ideas and arguments, locating and selecting quality sources to support arguments and presenting and defending arguments.

The art history major is research and writing-intensive, and these are highly transferable skills that will extend to both the academic world and beyond. Art history is an interdisciplinary major that combines elements of history, economics, political science, architecture and gender studies. Art history graduates can easily branch out into many fields because of their varied studies.

TRADITIONAL CAREER PATHWAYS

Many traditional art history careers are highly specialized and require graduate-level education for entry, especially in museums, collections and academia.

There are some entry level jobs available to art history bachelor's degree holders, but it should be noted they are rare and competitive positions. Often, a graduate degree is required for professionals to receive promotions and higher level positions in these fields.

It is especially important for all art history students to engage in internships and long-term volunteering. Gaining this experience while an undergraduate is the most direct pathway to competitive entry level jobs in the art history field and entry into graduate art history programs.

TRADITIONAL CAREER PATHWAYS *(cont.)*

Museums and Collections are a popular career goal for many art history students. Curators oversee and help conduct institution's research projects and related educational programs. They also authenticate, evaluate and categorize specimens in a collection. Closely related to curation, Archivists collect, organize and control a wide range of information critical to collections. Registrars help curators by preparing and taking care of museum items. They may answer questions from the public and help curators and outside scholars use collections. Other areas can include exhibition design, publications, conservation, museum education and community engagement.

Private Organizations have many opportunities for art history graduates. Art consultants advise clients on art acquisition, planning and maintenance of artwork. Clients can range from private collectors to commercial buildings and public institutions. Many art consultants work independently while others work at art consulting firms. Appraisers use their knowledge of art, the market and research skills to assess an artwork's dollar value, usually for tax, insurance or estate planning purposes. Appraisers work for auction houses, insurance companies or independently. Conservators maintain and preserve works of art and other materials. They must be knowledgeable about art methods as well as the science behind preserving and restoring work. Museums and conservation firms employ conservators, but some conservators work independently.

Arts Administration is well-suited for art history graduates as they have developed time management, organization and writing skills in addition to cultural appreciation. Arts administration encompasses work done to support arts organizations and venues, including development, marketing and operations. For more information, check out our Arts Administration Career Guide!

ALTERNATIVE CAREER PATHWAYS

We want to state clearly: an art history undergraduate degree without a graduate degree *does not* mean unemployability! There are many career pathways available to art history graduates in varied careers both inside and outside of the arts.

Writing is a critical skill gained in art history studies, and students can explore the possibilities of careers in journalism, development and grant writing, marketing, publishing and technical writing.

Research is an important component of many jobs, so art history students can consider pursuing research-oriented careers in library science, public policy, consulting and research assistance.

Art practice-based careers are not limited to students with studio art degrees. Students can explore careers including design, studio art and architecture.

Sensitivity to cultural viewpoints and interpreting cultural values and beliefs are skills keenly developed by art history students. They translates well to careers in people-centered fields including social justice work, education and art therapy.

Most of these fields have a variety of entry level jobs available to individuals without graduate degrees. This information is intended to help art history students think exploratively about their career pathways. This career guide is by no means comprehensive, and if you would like to explore your options in-depth, Fine Arts Career Services highly recommends that you set up a meeting with a Career Advisor.

JOB TITLES

Archivist

Art Appraiser

Art Authenticator

Art Critic

Collections and Exhibitions Assistant

Curator

Curatorial Assistant

Curatorial Research Associate

Development Associate

Docents and Tours Associate

Exhibition and Installation Technician

Exhibition Designer

Marketing Associate

Membership Associate

Museum Educator, Family and Community Programs

Museum Educator, School and Teacher Programs

Professor

Public Relations Associate

Registrar

Security Associate

Social Media and Digital Content Associate

Teacher

Note: The word “associate” in this context implies jobs around entry level. You could substitute “manager” or “director” for higher leadership roles which typically require several years of experience and a graduate degree.

LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

Salaries within art history vary widely, and we encourage students in every discipline to research within their field as early as possible so they know what to expect. Our office's favorite resource for salary research is Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com). The Occupational Outlook Handbook compiled by the U.S Department of Labor (www.bls.gov/ooh/) is also a great resource that provides average salary ranges, estimated growth for various industries and more.

FURTHERING YOUR EDUCATION

You've likely considered graduate school if you are studying art history. If that is your goal, we recommend maintaining strong grades, participating in internships and doing research during your undergraduate degree.

A *Master of Arts (MA)* is typically awarded for two to three years of academic and research-based study in fine arts and humanities fields. MAs are offered in related topic areas including conservation, art education, museum studies and arts administration.

A *Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)* is the terminal degree in the humanities and the primary credential for college-level teaching. Some PhD programs can be entered directly after receiving a bachelor's degree and will typically award a master's degree in the process. Other PhD programs require a master's degree for entry. The PhD typically consists of four to six years of full-time study in addition to the master's degree.

As with many career pathways, a bachelor's degree in art history does not limit students exclusively to graduate degrees in art history. Each graduate program has different focuses and standards for admission, so it's important to do your research no matter what your academic interests are. For example, if a university has an art history program focused on collections management but that's not what you want to pursue within the field, it is likely not the best fit for you.

Additionally, a certificate in *Museum Studies* is offered by the College of Liberal Arts that could help you build skills or learn more about this industry.

...NOW WHAT'S NEXT?

Maybe reading this guide has left you with questions, or feeling unsure about which career opportunities you want to explore.

That is okay!

Setting up an appointment with Fine Arts Career Services is a great way to brainstorm your next steps, whatever your goals may be!